IN THE CLAIMS:

Please re-write the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for proxying data access commands from a first
storage system to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the method com-
prising the steps of:
  receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the
second storage system;
  forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a
cluster interconnect;
  processing the data access command at the second storage system;
  returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via
the cluster interconnect; and
  sending a response to the data access command to ~~the~~ a client from the first stor-
age system.

2. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the storage systems are storage appliances
and wherein the data access command is received at a proxy port associated with the first
storage appliance.

3. (Original): The method of claim 2 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

4. (Original): The method of claim 2 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port as-
sociated with a physical port.

5. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises requested read
data.

1   6. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises an acknowledge-

2   ment of a write operation.

1   7. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises a predetermined

2   set of read data.

1   8. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a direct

2   link between the first storage system and the second storage system.

1   9. (Currently Amended): A system adapted to proxy data access commands from a first

2   storage system to a second storage system connected via a cluster interconnect, the sys-

3   tem comprising:

4   a virtual target ~~layer~~ module interfacing with a virtual adapter on the first storage

5   system, the virtual target module adapted to make a forwarding decision of a received

6   data access request to thereby forward the request to the second storage system.

1   10. (Original): The system of claim 9 wherein the forwarding decision is based on a port

2   to which the data access request is directed.

1   11. (Original): The system of claim 10 wherein the forwarding decision is based upon a

2   logical unit address contained within the data access request.

1   12. (Original): A storage appliance for use in a storage appliance cluster for proxying

2   data access commands received at the storage appliance to a second storage appliance in

3   a storage appliance cluster, the storage appliance comprising:

4   a storage operating system executing on the storage appliance, the storage operat-

5   ing system including a virtual target module adapted to forward received data access

6   commands to the second storage appliance in the storage appliance cluster.

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1 13. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 12 wherein the storage operating system

2 further comprising a virtual adapter that interfaces with the virtual target module and an

3 interconnect driver for forwarding the received data access commands from the virtual

4 target module to the second storage appliance via a cluster interconnect managed by the

5 interconnect driver.

1 14. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 13 wherein the cluster interconnect com-

2 prises a fibre channel interconnect.

1 15. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 13 wherein the cluster interconnect di-

2 rectly connects the storage appliance to the second storage appliance.

1 16. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 12 wherein the virtual adapter interfaces

2 with a virtual interface emulation layer to provide remote direct memory access capabili-

3 ties for transferring or forwarding received data access commands to the second storage

4 appliance.

1 17. (Currently Amended): A method for proxying data access commands in ~~the~~ a first

2 storage system to a second system in a storage system cluster, the method comprising the

3 steps of:

4 analyzing a received data access command at the first storage system~~,~~;

5 forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system; and

6 processing the received data access command at the second storage system.

1 18. (Original): The method of claim 17 further comprising the steps of;

2 returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system;

3 and

4

4   sending a response to the data access command to the client from the first storage

5   system.

1   19. (Original): The method of claim 17 wherein the step of forwarding further comprises

2   the step of forwarding the data access command to the second storage system via a clus-

3   ter interconnect.

1   20. (Original): The method of claim 19 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a fi-

2   bre channel link.

1   21. (Original): The method of claim 19 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a di-

2   rect link between the first storage system and the second storage system.

1   22. (Original): The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of receiving the data

2   access command is at a proxy port of the first storage system.

1   23. (Original): The method of claim 22 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical

2   port.

1   24. (Original): The method of claim 22 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port

2   associated with the physical port.

1   25. (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the response comprises requested read

2   data.

1   26. (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the response comprises an acknowl-

2   edgement of the write operation.

1   27. (Currently Amended): A computer readable medium, including program instructions

2   executing on a computer, for proxying data access commands from a first storage system

3   to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the computer readable medium

4   including instructions for performing the steps of:

5   receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the

6   second storage system;

7   forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a

8   cluster interconnect;

9   processing the data access command at the second storage system;

10   returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via

11 the cluster interconnect; and

12   sending a response to the data access command to ~~the~~ a client from the first stor-

13 age system.

1   28. (Currently Amended): A system for proxying data access commands from a first

2   storage system to a second storage system connected via a cluster interconnect, the sys-

3   tem comprising:

4   means for receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is di-

5   rected to the second storage system;

6   means for forwarding the received data access command to the second storage

7   system via a cluster interconnect;

8   means for processing the data access command at the second storage system;

9   means for returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage

10 system via the cluster interconnect; and

11   means for sending a response to the data access command to ~~the~~ a client from the

12 first storage system.

29. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein storage systems are storage appliances and the data access command is received at a proxy port associated with the first storage appliance.

30. (Original): The method of claim 29 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

31. (Original): The method of claim 29 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port associated with a physical port.

32. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein the response comprises requested read data.

33. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein the response comprises an acknowledgement of a write operation.

34. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein the response comprises a predetermined set of read data.

Please add new claims 35 et seq. as follows:

1   35. (New): A method for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to
2   a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the method comprising:
3   receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the
4   second storage system;
5   forwarding a data access command from the first storage system to the second
6   storage system;
7   processing the data access command at the second storage system; and
8   returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system.

9   36. (New): The method of claim 35 further comprises sending a response to the data ac-
10   cess command from the first storage system.

1   37. (New): The method of claim 35 wherein the data access command is forwarded via a
2   cluster interconnect.

1   38. (New): The method of claim 35 further comprises receiving by the first storage sys-
2   tem the data access command that is directed to the second storage system.

1   39. (New): The method of claim 35 further comprises returning the response from the
2   first storage system to a client.

1   40. (New): The method of claim 39 wherein the response is returned via the cluster in-
2   terconnect.